

Department of Human Services

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Articles in Today's Clips Monday, November 5, 2007

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ClickOnDetroit.com

Police: Detroit Girl, 2, Dies After Beating

Mother Tells Hotel Manager To Call Police

POSTED: 9:53 am EST November 4, 2007

UPDATED: 10:02 am EST November 4, 2007

DETROIT -- Police said a 2-year-old Detroit girl died after being beaten by her mother.

Officials said officers were dispatched early Saturday to a Detroit motel after the child's mother told a hotel manager that she had hit her child and that police needed to be called.

Officials said the girl was taken to a hospital, where she was pronounced dead on arrival.

Police said the mother was expected to face charges.

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Legislator: Sex offender list is missing names

Of Capital News Service

Michigan's sex offender registry isn't a complete list of dangerous predators.

Offenders convicted before 1995 aren't required to register.

Rep. David Law, RCommerce Township, wants to change that.

He said sex crimes against minors left an imprint on him during his time working in the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office.

Law's bill would require some individuals convicted on or before Oct. 1, 1995 to register. It would cover offenders who were age 17 or older when they sexually assaulted a child younger than 13.

"This bill is not about further punishing sex offenders - this is a matter of public safety," Law said. "The recidivism statistics of the most heinous sex offenders pose a significant threat to public safety and our children."

According to the Michigan State Police, the intent of the registry is "to better assist the public in preventing and protecting against the commission of future criminal sexual acts by convicted sex offenders."

Offenders are required to register if they reside, work or live in the state and have been convicted of specific sex crimes. The registry is a public record and includes the individual's name, photo, crime, physical description, last known address and aliases.

But not everyone sees the proposal as an efficient way to make the public and children safer.

Elizabeth Arnovits, executive director of the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency, said the bill draws attention to an emotional issue but the registry isn't an effective policy. She said that laws such as sex offender reporting may make people feel more secure when, in reality, they accomplish little and make people less vigilant because they're lulled into a false sense of security.

"These laws are not making people safer," Arnovits said. "These things don't protect anybody."

Arnovits predicted the proposal would pass.

"It is an emotional and political issue," she said. "It will pass in a flash."

Patricia Caruso, director of the Department of Corrections, said the recidivism rates for sex offenders are extremely low, but because sexual assault is such an emotional issue, the facts are often ignored.

According to Caruso, laws that require offenders to stay a minimum distance from playgrounds and other areas with children are "meaningless and ineffective" because less than 1 percent of sex crimes against minors are committed by strangers.

She said most offenders are close friends or relatives of the victim.

Law said he's not very concerned about the rights of sex offenders because they "didn't have any regard for the rights of the victim when they molested them."

He also said the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld retroactive use of such registries.

"As access to children gets easier due to emerging technology, we have to fight harder to protect our kids," Law said.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.theoaklandpress.com/stories/110507/loc_20071105110.shtml



Groups target infant deaths

Saturday, November 03, 2007

A meeting to discuss the problem failed to reach the desired audience.

JILL ARMENTROUT

THE SAGINAW NEWS

A leadership summit to address the problems of infant mortality and premature births in Saginaw County drew about 50 health and education professionals Friday, but failed to draw the attention of business and other community leaders.

The meeting was the first step in a campaign to revitalize efforts to reduce the county's infant deaths and remove the racial disparities that hurt more black children.

Summit organizers from the Saginaw County Infant Mortality Coalition, the Saginaw County Department of Public Health, Synergy Medical Education Alliance, Covenant HealthCare and the Great Start Collaborative of Saginaw County invited 300 people to attend the event.

"We didn't get the people we wanted -- the business leaders and churches and county commissioners," said Lynn Scheerhoorn, coordinator of the infant mortality coalition. "So now we have to ignite a fire to get this group to get them here."

There were a total of 18 infant deaths in Saginaw County in 2006 out of 2,550 live births. The county's Fetal Infant Mortality Review team analyzes all cases of children who die before their first birthday. Prematurity and low birth weight cause more than half the deaths.

Nationally, premature births have increased by 30 percent since 1981. The national Institutes of Medicine estimate these tiny babies cost the country \$26 billion a year in medical and education costs.

Infant mortality rates in the county dropped in 2006 compared to the year before, but the rate of deaths in the city of Saginaw remains higher than the state average.

In 2006, 10.2 babies died per thousand live births in Saginaw. The rate was 7.1 for Saginaw County, compared to Michigan's rate of 7.4 deaths per thousand births

A disparity between white and black babies dying remains in Saginaw County, with a ratio of black to white infant deaths of 2.5 to 1 for 2006. The city's rate of black babies dying is the second worst in the state behind Pontiac, state data shows.

The infant mortality rate is an important barometer of the health of an entire community, officials said.

"Babies dying is just the tip of an iceberg that includes premature birth, racism, poverty, stress, substance abuse and more," said Rosemary Fournier, coordinator of the state's 15 Fetal Infant Mortality Review teams. "The risk factors are social, not medical."

There are more minority babies dying and more minority children in special education, said Rich Van Tol, director of Early Childhood and Parenting Services for the Saginaw County Intermediate School District.

"Saginaw County has the second highest percentage of students needing special education services in the state, at 18.8 percent compared to the state average of 14.5 percent," Van Tol said. "Costs for special education are two to three times higher than regular education and districts make up the difference for unfunded costs.

"That was a total of \$57 million in the county last school year. We have to reduce the rate of children

needing this to reduce the costs. We can't afford it."

A number of county services send advocates into homes of at-risk women and children for parenting help, breastfeeding support and health monitoring, but these resources aren't reaching all families, officials said.

Young men and women also aren't getting the message about planning for healthy pregnancy early enough, educators said. Health professionals haven't gotten approval to bring preconception information into the schools, Scheerhoorn said.

Federal Health and Human Services staff will visit the county Wednesday, Nov. 14, to assess health and social services available to combat infant deaths, said Dr. Thomas A. Raskauskas, chairman and director of the obstetrics and gynecology department at Synergy.

"We will go over the recommendations with doctors in grand rounds at the end of November, then convene a committee from this summit at the beginning of December.

"By March 1, we want to have an action plan of three or four projects to bring to our representatives (in Lansing) to ask for funding consideration."

A \$25,000 grant is available from March of Dimes if leaders can find local matching dollars, Raskauskas said.

Ideas include making a video of premature newborns in the Regional Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Covenant to increase awareness of the serious health effects in babies that do survive.

"There is a perception among some young women in the community that babies who are born at 28 weeks do OK," Raskauskas said. "They say they are tired of being pregnant and want to induce labor early."

One in eight babies in the U.S. is born prematurely. They may need help with feeding and breathing after birth. They face greater risk of cerebral palsy, mental retardation, chronic lung disease, vision and hearing loss.

Dr. Daniel Wechter, a Saginaw perinatologist who cares for high-risk women in pregnancy, said he wants to bring the video into schools and let students hear from young parents who have lost babies and had healthy babies.

"They will listen more to them than to us giving lectures," he said.

The people who attended the summit are the workers "in the trenches," said Dr. Michelle Duncan, an obstetrician/gynecologist with Synergy and summit presenter. "Some things we are doing are working really well, but we still had 18 babies die last year.

"We have so many great resources, so why isn't the community receiving them? Because the community isn't here. They are separate from us. We need to make a shift to reach them."

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Monday, November 05, 2007

Benefits battle

By David Eggert
Associated Press writer

Monday, November 05, 2007

LANSING - The Michigan Supreme Court on Tuesday will begin weighing whether state universities and other public-sector employers can provide health insurance to the partners of gay workers.

But even if gays lose the case, they ultimately could still get their benefits despite a 2004 state constitutional ban against gay marriage that has threatened those benefits.

Universities and local governments have rewritten their domestic partnership policies in light of the measure.

The new policies no longer specifically acknowledge domestic partnerships but make sure "other qualified adults" - including gay partners - are eligible for medical and dental care. The adults have to live together for a certain amount of time, be unmarried, share finances and be unrelated.

"It's a temporary, stopgap method. It's certainly not a panacea," said Jay Kaplan, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan. While no same-sex partners of employees have lost their health insurance while the legal battle continues, many now are getting health insurance on a pilot basis, he said.

The University of Michigan, Michigan State University and the city of Kalamazoo changed their rules after the state Court of Appeals in February ruled that the gay marriage ban also bars benefits for the same-sex partners of public employees.

The court signaled, however, that benefits for unmarried partners would be OK if they aren't based on recognizing their "agreed-upon relationship."

Kaplan said the distinction made by the appeals court was disingenuous.

"You can exist as long as we don't acknowledge you exist," he said.

Depending how the high court rules, benefits for gay couples may continue because conservatives who drafted the marriage amendment don't appear to have big problems with the new benefit policies - at least legally.

"They may be constitutional. I don't anticipate further lawsuits on that particular question," said Gary Glenn, president of the Midland-based American Family Association of Michigan.

But Glenn and the AFA still oppose same-sex partner benefits.

"From a standpoint of public policy, we don't believe the taxpayers of Michigan should be forced to subsidize behavior the majority of citizens believe is wrong," he said.

The redesigned policies' legality could be on the back burner Tuesday when the Supreme Court hears an appeal by 21 gay couples who lost their rights to benefits for both partners in the appeals court, although those who had them have kept those benefits while the case is being appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court.

The case is focused on whether voters in 2004 meant to prohibit anything more than gay marriage, and if they did, whether the measure should bar same-sex benefits.

The ACLU, Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm, gay activists and public employers say the measure should be restricted to defining marriage as between a man and woman and leave the issue of same-sex benefits alone.

Married couples get rights such as inheritance through laws, they argue, but contractual benefits such as health insurance are negotiated as part of labor agreements. Therefore, contracts that allow benefits to go to gay couples shouldn't be affected by constitutional changes, they say.

Republican Attorney General Mike Cox and conservative groups think voters understood that they were getting rid of domestic partner benefits when they voted for the marriage proposal. Michigan's gay marriage ban says the union between a man and woman is the only agreement recognized as marriage "or similar union for any purpose."

"The word 'any' means any," Glenn said of the amendment's wording. "That may be broad but it's not vague."

Giving benefits to two people of the same sex remains constitutional if those benefits also are offered to other unmarried people, he said. The University of Michigan's new rules, for instance, appear to let an unmarried widow get health insurance if she lives with an unmarried and similar widowed university employee.

Michigan's highest court has a 5-2 Republican majority, and the couples could find the court's conservatives will stick to what they see as the plain language of the law.

If those justices interpret the constitutional amendment broadly, it's easy to see why employers and gay workers are nervous. They want to win the underlying case as a matter of principle and not have to fall back on arguing that same-sex benefit policies are OK as long as they're worded carefully.

Up to 20 public universities, community colleges, school districts and local governments in Michigan have benefits policies covering at least 375 gay couples. Universities, which employ most of those affected, argue that not being able to offer health care coverage will hurt them when it comes to recruiting faculty and staff.

Many schools filed papers with the Supreme Court saying the appeals court created a "near disastrous" situation by leaving them to guess whether benefit packages are legal and putting employees "in a continual state of uncertainty and anxiety."

Sixteen of the gay plaintiffs have partners who currently get health benefits. Five others work for the state, which agreed to start offering same-sex benefits in 2004 but won't put them into place until courts clear up the dispute.

The case is National Pride at Work v. Granholm

Related Links



Supreme Court gets many briefs in same-sex benefits case

11/4/2007, 4:46 p.m. ET

The Associated Press

(AP) — Lawyers have filed 726 pages of legal briefs with the Michigan Supreme Court in the case involving whether health care insurance can be provided to the same-sex partners of university and other public-sector employees. Interested groups and individuals include:

- _AFL-CIO
- _American Association of University Professors
- _American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan
- _American Family Association of Michigan
- _Attorney General Mike Cox
- _Central Michigan University
- _Citizens for the Protection of Marriage
- _City of Ann Arbor
- _City of Kalamazoo
- _Eastern Michigan University
- _Gov. Jennifer Granholm
- _Human Rights Campaign
- _LAMBDA Legal Defense and Education Fund
- _Lansing Association of Human Rights
- _Michigan Education Association
- _Michigan Equality
- _Michigan Family Forum
- _Michigan Pride at Work
- _Michigan Professors of Law
- _Michigan State Medical Society
- _Michigan State University
- _Michigan Technological University
- _National Pride at Work

_Northern Michigan University

_Office and Professional Employees International Union

_Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays

_Saginaw Valley State University

_Service Employees International Union Local 517M

_Triangle Foundation

_UAW

_University of Michigan

_Wayne State University

_Women Lawyers Association of Michigan

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Source: Michigan Supreme Court

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Teens' sentence in dune fire brings sticker shock

Saturday, November 03, 2007

By John Tunison

The Grand Rapids Press

ALLEGAN -- Joe Lacombe expected his son to get jail time and community service for his role in a Lakeshore dune fire that destroyed three expensive homes.

It was the \$6.6 million in restitution that came out of the blue.

"I don't understand that amount of money," he said after his son, Matthew, and two other teens were sentenced Friday in Allegan County Circuit Court to 90 days of jail, to be served on weekends, 300 hours of community service and two years of probation.

The restitution is to be worked out among the homeowners' insurance companies representing the teens, under personal liability provisions, and those of the burned-out residents.

"They are already communicating back and forth, I believe," said Allegan County Prosecutor Fred Anderson, describing the sky-high restitution value as something he has not seen before in Allegan County.

The \$6.6 million is the total replacement value of the homes, the contents and anything else insured on the properties, but not the land value, Anderson said. Minor damage to a fourth home and landscaping also was included.

Judge George Corsiglia said the restitution would be "subject to review" until defense attorneys can review insurance documents and make any objections.

In court, Matthew Lacombe, Kyle Sova and Thomas Starback II, all 18, offered apologies to the victims who lost homes when they lit fireworks at a campsite just north of the Saugatuck Dunes State Park in Laketown Township.

They intended to shoot them into Lake Michigan, but strong winds blew them back into dune grass and a fire erupted that spread over 50 acres and destroyed the Spring Beauty Lane homes of former state Rep. Jessie Dalman and her husband, Ron, as well as John and Barbara Myaard, and Libby Boven. Construction has begun on new homes on the Dalman and Myaard properties.

The teens told attorneys they rushed to put out the fire when it started, but it grew too fast. They tried to call 911 but were out of cell phone range on the dune and, by the time they ran to their car, they could hear fire crews on the way.

Lacombe told the judge how "what was supposed to be a harmless night of fun turned out to be the worst day of my life" and described his actions as "childish and thoughtless."

One of the burned-out homeowners became emotional as she spoke to the judge about her losses.

"This is very difficult because I feel badly for these three young men, I really do," Barbara Myaard said. "I know they didn't do anything intentionally, but it happened.

"It's true we had a very nice home, and it can be replaced, but I didn't care about the house. It's the precious things that can never be replaced. They need to learn, maybe the hard way."

Myaard questioned the teens' reason for not calling 911 and whether fire crews were already on the way. She learned they did call a friend to tell him not to come to their campsite as planned.

"They could have made another call and reported the fire, but did not. If they had, it might have saved our homes."

Sova and Lacombe can have their convictions erased under a special "youthful trainee" program if they successfully complete probation, but Starback has two previous misdemeanor convictions for property destruction and retail fraud and did not qualify.

Joe Lacombe said the teens are good kids who just made a bad decision.

"From day one, they have been sorry. They weren't out there trying to burn homes down," he said.

Send e-mail to the author: jtunison@grpress.com

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ClickOnDetroit.com

Police: Man Shoots Ex-Girlfriend, Kills Boyfriend

POSTED: 3:03 pm EST November 4, 2007

UPDATED: 7:21 pm EST November 4, 2007

WARREN, Mich. -- Police arrested a 39-year-old man on Sunday morning in connection with a double shooting in Warren.

Warren police responded to the 11000 block of Continental for reports of a shooting at 9:38 a.m.

Police said they found a 32-year-old black woman inside of a car. The woman suffered gunshot wounds to her face and her head.

She is currently in critical condition at a nearby hospital.

Police said they found a 36-year-old black man fatally shot in the head and in the neck lying next to the car.

The man was allegedly the woman's current boyfriend.

Witnesses told police they saw a man with a backpack flee from the house on foot.

The man crossed Hoover Road and tried to hide in a wooded area, according to police.

A 39-year-old man was arrested by the Warren police after the short foot pursuit.

Police said the man in custody is the female victim's ex-boyfriend.

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Food-stamp diet a success

Posted by [Brad Flory](#)

Jackson Citizen Patriot

November 04, 2007 06:17AM

By all outward indications, I am not dead.

Survival was a matter of doubt all through October because many people assumed I set out to systematically starve myself and my innocent family.

"Do you need nourishment?" people asked. "I can give you soup."

This was my reward for trying to feed a family of four on a food-stamp budget. We did it as an experiment for a month that ended Wednesday.

Happily, I report a food-stamp diet does not equal a starvation diet.

OK, it is true I lost 7 pounds in 31 days. But my ribcage does not protrude and my pants do not fall to the floor. There is still plenty of me to spare.

Financially speaking, my family met the challenge.

Food expenses for the month were \$448.84, almost \$70 under our food-stamp budget. Our family would receive an estimated \$518 a month in food stamps if we had no income.

We spent \$1.21 per person per meal. Throw out 46 lunches my kids ate at school -- which is not cheating because they would eat the same school lunches for free if we had no income -- and our cost was \$1.38 per person per meal. Consider the fact I never eat breakfast during the work week and the cost was \$1.48 per person per meal. Consider the fact my wife and I ate dinner once at a wedding reception and once at a charity banquet, and we spent \$1.50 per person per meal.

"How much money did you save?" people ask.

No precise answer is possible because, unlike an organized family, we never tracked food expenses. Best we can guess, we saved about \$150 on grocery

bills plus at least \$200 on restaurants. We did not eat in a restaurant, snack bar or doughnut shop all month.

Our biggest sacrifice was my usual work-week lunches of burgers, coney dogs or greasy sandwiches. This succulent fare was replaced by sack lunches featuring sandwiches made of low-end lunch meat and cheap bread. So you see why I lost 7 pounds.

Family dinners at home were economical, but not meager. People who look for sales and watch pennies already know \$518 is plenty to provide filling and nutritious meals.

Hamburger-based dishes like spaghetti, chili, sloppy joes and burgers were on the menu twice each week. Other meals featured fish, chicken, ham and sausage. We never ate T-bone steaks, but we did not eat ramen noodles, either.

Vegetables were served with every meal, and we always had fruit in the house. We purchased a vast supply of yogurt, which I discovered my family eats in astonishing quantities. Unhealthy snacks like cookies, pop and potato chips were always available.

The most difficult part was all the thinking required to plan menus and shopping trips around a sale on ground chuck at Meijer or chicken at Polly's. Sometimes it made my head hurt. It gave me new respect for single mothers who do it with a low-paying job, a couple of kids and a junky car.

"How did your wife and children handle this?" people ask.

Remarkably well, although they are glad it's over.

"We're getting Domino's pizza on Nov. 1," our 17-year-old daughter declared last week. "And nothing you can do will stop us."

Two lessons from the experiment will stick. Both involve guilt.

Within a couple of weeks, I felt guilty about my old habit of regularly throwing out moldy bread, sour milk or neglected leftovers.

People trying to stretch a budget cannot allow food to spoil. It's almost a sin. If bread starts getting stale, you cook grilled cheese sandwiches or French toast.

The second lesson came from a Jackson family of three that lives on Chittock Avenue.

The family sent me grocery receipts showing they spend about \$216 a month on food. But not all the food goes to their kitchen.

October's grocery bill included \$15.20 for five boxes of potatoes and five packages of stuffing mix donated to a food pantry. The family gives to the pantry every month.

Talk about guilt.

After a month of pretending to be poor, it stings to admit I do nothing to help families that do not enjoy the luxury of pretending.

If I correct that failure, the experiment will be a success.



Homeless for a night

Students, chaperones participate in A Box Village: A Night on the Streets

Patti Klevorn - News Editor

Monday, November 5, 2007

By NICOLE BROWN

Daily News Intern

Students and chaperones learning about people who are homeless spent Friday night panhandling, sleeping in cardboard boxes and huddling together over trash can fires. They shivered as the temperatures dropped to 34 degrees.



As part of A Box Village: A Night on the Streets, participants stayed outdoors at Ludington City Park and spent a stint downtown panhandling for money they donated to the United Way of Mason County.

"People just don't care. They don't really realize what people who live on the streets go through. If they were out here like we are now, they would understand," Daniel Vankampen said about his experience.

Some had doors shut in their faces and were told to get a job or to get a life.

"There is not much to offer to the homeless that live in Mason county. Through a 10-year program we are going to try to change that," said Kathy Kovalchik-Lacko of the Mason County Homelessness Continuum of Care, who organized the event with Lynne Russell of the United Way. "Tonight was the first step in this plan, to try to bring services into Mason County to try to help these people."

Some groups had a better experience panhandling than others. Group four got food from a fish fry and other meals they sold to people they encountered. Groups had different territories around Ludington. Group three stood outside of Jamesport Brewing Co. and sang "How Could Anyone Ever Tell You You're Anything Less Than Beautiful." They also held up signs that read, "Help the Homeless."

Group five panhandled outside of Wesco. They sang songs and also played the ukulele. After a while Wesco employees kicked them out of the parking lot because they were taking too much room away from their customers.

"I feel low begging people for money, and I just think of the people in Mason County who are homeless and how they must feel. It really opens my eyes," Amber Martz said.

“The students are getting a taste of what it is like,” Kovalchik-Lacko said.

“The teams traveled around in packs and people seemed intimidated,” Russell said. “I wanted both the students and community leaders to get a feeling of what it is like out here, and I think they have.”

After the teams panhandled, they met back at Ludington City Park to count all the money they raised. The total came to \$769.63.

The teams then built shelters out of cardboard boxes, tape and newspapers. Group three built their shelter between the public restroom and another shack, which protected them from the wind.

Then the teams were able to sit down, relax and watch a movie, “The Pursuit of Happyness,” starring Will Smith as Chris Gardner, a San Francisco salesman who falls on hard times and goes through a period of homelessness in this true story. Some watched the movie, others fell asleep with their heads on the curb.

1 [2 Continue »](#)

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MIRS

November 1, 2007

Granholm Vetoes Millions In Earmarks

In putting her signature to 15 of the 17 bills that make up the Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 budget last night

Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM**, struck out 25 extras and carve-outs with her line-item veto authority, covering millions of dollars in spending, many of which came from the Department of Human Services (DHS) budget.

In the version of **SB 0232** sent to the Governor, the Legislature laid out a detailed schedule of adoption

rates that Granholm wrote was higher than what she negotiated with lawmakers. Instead, she said she's

asking the DHS to give adoption providers a 4 percent increase.

Granholm also scratched out a provision in the DHS budget that set the state's payment rate for indigent

burials at \$1,063 per death - a rate she said is 50 percent higher than the current payment. Under the

budget provision, funeral directors were getting \$677, cemeteries \$225 and vault providers \$161. The

Governor said DHS would continue to pay what it's been paying.

Budget Office Spokeswoman Leslee **FRITZ** said officials are still calculating the financial impact of the 25.

line-item vetoes, which could expand in number after the Governor is done with the Higher Education

budget (**HB 4350**) and the School Aid Fund budget (**HB 4359**). Because state payments to universities

and public schools aren't due until the middle of the month, the Governor may wait until next week to

finish both spending plans.

The Governor was able to sign every state department-related budget by midnight Oct. 31 -Nov. 1,

beating the expiration deadline of the 31-day continuation budget for FY 2008 signed Oct. 1, meaning

state government never lost its authority to pay its employees.

Also within the DHS budget, the most contentious of the budgets this year, Granholm nixed nine other spending directives, including another legislative formula that set spending rates for children in juvenile justice homes. Granholm said the provision was unenforceable because it attempted to write state law through an appropriations bill.

Other DHS vetoes included:

- \$5 million in Title IV-E money specifically for local units of government.

Granholm said she likes the existing policy of splitting the revenue equally between the state and the counties.

- \$2.5 million to support new contracts with private, non-profit child-placing agencies to pay for the

licensure of relative caregivers as foster parents. The idea here is that the more foster parents the state

finds to take children, the more money the state can save in the long term.

Granholm said this line item

was, "Inconsistent with discussions during final budget negotiations."

- \$500,000 for a private contractor to shake down parents who owe child support. Under the plan, the

contractor would have been allowed to keep 15 percent of the money as a service fee. Another 15

percent would go to the state on behalf of welfare recipients.

Said Granholm on that veto, "The department is already piloting a similar effort to increase child support

collections and I await the results of that pilot before instituting a new project."

- \$300,000 to the Newberry community action agency to support its social services program

- \$250,000 to pay for "strong marriage," fatherhood and parenting classes

- \$200,000 to support a kinship care resource center administered by

Michigan State University's School

of Social Work

- \$78,500 for a Pontiac school-based crisis intervention project

- \$11,500 for the DHS' Midland County office to for a counseling and support program for kinship families

Another line item concerning day care services was struck down because it conflicted with another

section.

No Special Pot For AG

Attorney General Mike **COX** again was thwarted in his seemingly annual attempt to get a slice of any settlement his attorneys receive to cover legal fees was again vetoed. This go-around, Cox wanted the first \$250,000 in money the Attorney General lawyers collected from an anti-trust, securities fraud, consumer protection or class action enforcement to cover the cost of his staff.

Granholtz said the provision basically let the Attorney General spend more General Fund money than it was allowed.

Also within the General Government budget (**SB 0222**), Granholtz vetoed a \$300,000 study designed to look at a provision in state law that allows public school retirees to add a new spouse as a pension beneficiary after a previous spouse had died or in the case of when a retiree retired single. The study was to be finished on Sept. 30, 2009.

On this item, the Governor wrote, "(it) requires the Department of Management and Budget to conduct an extensive inventory of all of the state's personal property to evaluate asset monetization proposals."

Also within that budget, Granholtz vetoed \$51,000 to pay for annual dues to the national conference of commissioners on uniform state laws because the department is not a member of the organization.

No Ergonomics, Credit Scoring Limits

Two legislative provisions that banned the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) from spending any money or staff time on developing ergonomic standards more strict than federal law or insurance company limitations on the use of credit scores in rate-setting were vetoed by the Governor.

The Legislature had asked DLEG to give it a report on the development of any ergonomics standards rules or guidelines it may be working on. Granholtz called both provisions "unenforceable."

Odds And Ends

- A study conducted by a national entity designed to examine law enforcement needs in the state was

vetoed as being unnecessary. The legislative intent behind the study put into the Michigan State Police

budget was to find out how well or poorly certain areas of the state are served by police protection.

Granholm said the study was not needed because the MSP already is doing its own study.

- A \$1 million cooperative resources management initiative program added to the Department of

Agriculture budget was vetoed because, the Governor said, "I cannot support use of General Fund

revenues for this discretionary program during these tough fiscal times."

- A \$30,000 gift to the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station, which specializes in cherry

industry research, was vetoed because the spending "is not part of the core functions" of the Department

of Agriculture, the Governor said.

- An attempt to put any unused purse money from thoroughbred horse racing into an escrow account for

18 months was vetoed because it attempted to write state law through an appropriations bill.

- A \$250,000 real-time water quality monitoring grant for the St. Clair watershed was vetoed because the

Governor said that "significant state resources" had been spent on this before and that locals had agreed

to use the unspent balance of the FY 2007 budget to figure out how to pay for the program.

Maybe We Won't Monitor Those Fed Dollars

The Department of Transportation (MDOT) will not have to go before the House and Senate

appropriations committees before it can spend any federal money it receives, thanks to a gubernatorial

veto.

Under the legislative provision in the MDOT budget (**SB 0240**) that

Granholm vetoed, the department

would have had 30 days to make its case to the two committees on its spending plans for federal money.

If the Legislature didn't agree or didn't act within that time frame, the two committees would get

together and determine how the money would be spent.

Granholm said this was a violation of the Constitution's separation of powers doctrine.

Granholm also didn't agree with a "cost allocation plan" the Legislature wanted the Department of Treasury to conduct on the true cost of collecting gas taxes. The Legislature has suspected for years that the department overbills MDOT. The "cost allocation plan" would have been subject to an Auditor General audit.

"I continue to believe this level of administrative oversight by the Legislature is unwarranted," Granholm wrote.

The Governor also vetoed penalties for bus operators who didn't get their lifts for those with disabilities fixed by April 30. The Governor said the penalties were unenforceable because it attempted to write state law through an appropriations bill.